







Frank Lobdell "Cat. no. 66, Sept. 15, 1964," 57 x 47"

A Painterly Vision: California 1960's
Paintings and Works on Paper

February 10–March 14

John Altoon
Elmer Bischoff
Bill Brown
Joan Brown
Jay De Feo
Sam Francis
Tom Holland
John Hultberg
Frank Lobdell
George Miyasaki
Nathan Oliveira
Roland Peterson
Hassell Smith
James Weeks

Stephen Wirtz Gallery

345 Sutter Street San Francisco, CA 94108 415/433-6879

LOBDELL, FRANK





"...how far can one artist go?"

-Frank Lobdell, San Francisco 1946



LOBDELL, FRANK

Frank Lobdell

MAKING AND MEANING

MAY 22 - AUGUST 29, 2004







Frank Lobdell

Recent Work: 1990-2004

October 14 – November 27, 2004

Reception for the Artist: Thursday, October 14, 5:30–7:30pm

Color Catalogue with Essay by Bruce Guenther,
Chief Curator Portland Art Museum, \$20 ppd.

Photos and information: Tracy Freedman or Susan McDonough at 415.362.7152

Email: tfreedman@hackettfreedmangallery.com, smcdonough@hackettfreedmangallery.com

Gallery Hours: Tue. - Fri. 10:30-5:30pm; Sat. 11 - 5pm

HACKETT
GALLERY
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PRESS
RELEASE

PREVIEW NEW EXHIBITIONS AT WWW.HACKETTFREEDMANGALLERY.COM

Hackett-Freedman Gallery of San Francisco presents a selection of new, brilliantly hued, large-scale paintings by Frank Lobdell October 14–November 27, 2004. An opening reception for the artist takes place Thursday, October 14, from 5:30–7:30 pm at 250 Sutter Street, 4th Floor.

“Frank Lobdell is having a late great period,” says Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco curator Timothy Anglin Burgard, who compares Lobdell’s productivity and vision to that of Pablo Picasso in his late years. Burgard co-curated, along with Robert Flynn Johnson of the Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, a traveling retrospective of Lobdell’s career for San Francisco’s Legion of Honor in 2003. Johnson describes Lobdell as a “master artist” of seemingly unlimited creativity, who calls up archetypal symbols from deep in the unconscious mind to speak to the experience of living.

At 83 Frank Lobdell is one of America’s most significant living painters. Nationally acclaimed since the 1950s, Lobdell continues to paint seven days a week since retiring as head of the Stanford University Art Department in 1991. In more than 50 years of gallery and museum exhibits in San Francisco and New York, Lobdell has continually pushed his work, reinventing and recycling the ideas behind his imagery, keeping to his tenet that “the



12.30.93-2.3.94 *Pier* 70 72 x 64" oil on canvas, 1993-94

purpose of painting is always to go beyond what can be said in words.” This exhibition surveys developments in his work from 1990 to 2004, a period in which Lobdell’s symbology and palette have grown steadily richer, freer, more life-affirming, and more unified than ever before.

These recent works represent a high point in what the late San Francisco critic Thomas Albright described as “a constant...evolution in Lobdell’s art...from a somber, sometimes tragic sense of elemental conflict to a lyrical and exalted liberation, from darkness into light.” This evolution is the product of Lobdell’s years of dialogue with his unconscious, a hallmark that joins him with other great surrealist artists, writes Portland Art Museum Chief Curator Bruce Guenther in his catalogue essay. The region “beyond paint” that Lobdell creates features a group of forms and symbols he has developed over many years, set against luminous and startling colors. The works are neither figurative nor abstract, but comprise a world of the artist’s own making.

Works included in this show were produced at Lobdell’s Pier 70 shipyard studio of twenty years and at his recent studio in San Francisco’s North Beach neighborhood, a close walk from his home. Several works since 2000 were included in a traveling retrospective that originated at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, in 2003, and that has continued this summer at the Portland Art Museum.

Lobdell is renowned for working with a “monastic commitment” to the principles of creative intuition—a philosophy he credits to the powerful influence of his mentor at the California School of Fine Arts (CSFA), the late Clyfford Still. Lobdell’s present-day work fuses archetypal forms and symbols (some inspired by Anatolian textiles) with a new, vibrant palette marked by soothing yet dramatic color: pure cobalt blue, cadmium yellow and sea green, milky and underpainted lavender, and vibrant reds for accent. These paintings are inhabited by original objects that are clearly connected to forms in Lobdell’s earliest work.

Studying at the San Francisco Art Institute (formerly CSFA) in the late 1940s, Lobdell was quickly recognized as an exemplar of west coast abstract expressionism, a movement that in scope and ambition paralleled that of the New York School after World War II. Despite the obvious shifts in the appearance of Lobdell’s work over the years, the impact of his early mentors—Clyfford Still and Mark Rothko—and of artists ranging from Picasso, to Goya, to the Neolithic cave painters at Lascaux, reveals itself in his current paintings.



Fall I 2003, Francisco Street 54 x 48" oil on canvas, 2003

Frank Lobdell was born in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1921, and studied with Cameron Booth (a former student of Hans Hofmann and an enthusiast for European abstraction) at the St. Paul School of Fine Arts. From 1942 until 1946 Frank Lobdell saw active service in Europe during World War II, where his first-hand witness of war atrocities profoundly influenced his early work. He then studied at CSFA from 1947-1950, with Richard Diebenkorn, Clyfford Still, and Mark Rothko. Lobdell returned to teach at CSFA in 1957, then joined the Stanford University faculty in 1966; he retired in 1991.

Lobdell is a recipient of the Medal for Distinguished Achievement in Painting from the American Academy and Institute of Arts & Letters. His works are held in the collections of the M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, the Laguna Art Museum, the Portland Museum of Art, and the Oakland Museum of California, among others. “Frank Lobdell: The Art of Making and Meaning” exhibited at the Portland Art Museum in Summer 2004. He is represented exclusively by Hackett-Freedman Gallery.

ONE-MAN

LOBDELL

PASADENA ART MUSEUM
46 NO. LOS ROBLES AVE., PASADENA, CALIF. 91101

LOBDELL

March 15 through April 10, 1966

Mr. Henry Hopkins
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
5905 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90036

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for

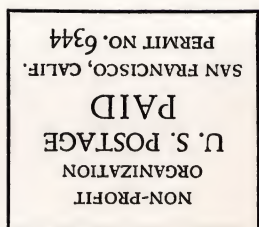
FRANK LOBDELL

Tuesday, March fifteenth, 1966

8:00 to 10:00 in the evening



*Alfred
Los Angeles Art Museum
Exposition Park 7
Los Angeles, Calif.*



SAN FRANCISCO ART ASSOCIATION
800 Chestnut Street • San Francisco

Mr. Lobdell was born in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1921. He studied painting with Cameron Booth and later attended the California School of Fine Arts. Since 1957, he has been associated with the school as an instructor in graduate and undergraduate painting and drawing. Mr. Lobdell has won a number of important prizes: the Artist Council Prize in 1948, the San Francisco Bank Prize in 1950. He was one of the Pacific Coast artists represented in the Third Biennial, Sao Paulo, Brazil, in 1955. He has just completed a one-man show at the De Young Museum in San Francisco and is scheduled for one at the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York in the Spring.

Jury for the Sullivan Award consisted of Mrs. Nell Sinton, member of the San Francisco Art Commission, Professor Herschel B. Chipp of the Art Department, University of California in Berkeley, and Paul Mills, Director of the Oakland Art Museum. The Nealie Sullivan Award of \$1,000 annually was made possible through a bequest of the late Adaline Kent, for presentation to a talented, promising, and deserving artist working in California.

ONE-MAN

FEB 24 1960

LOBDELL

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS LIBRARY
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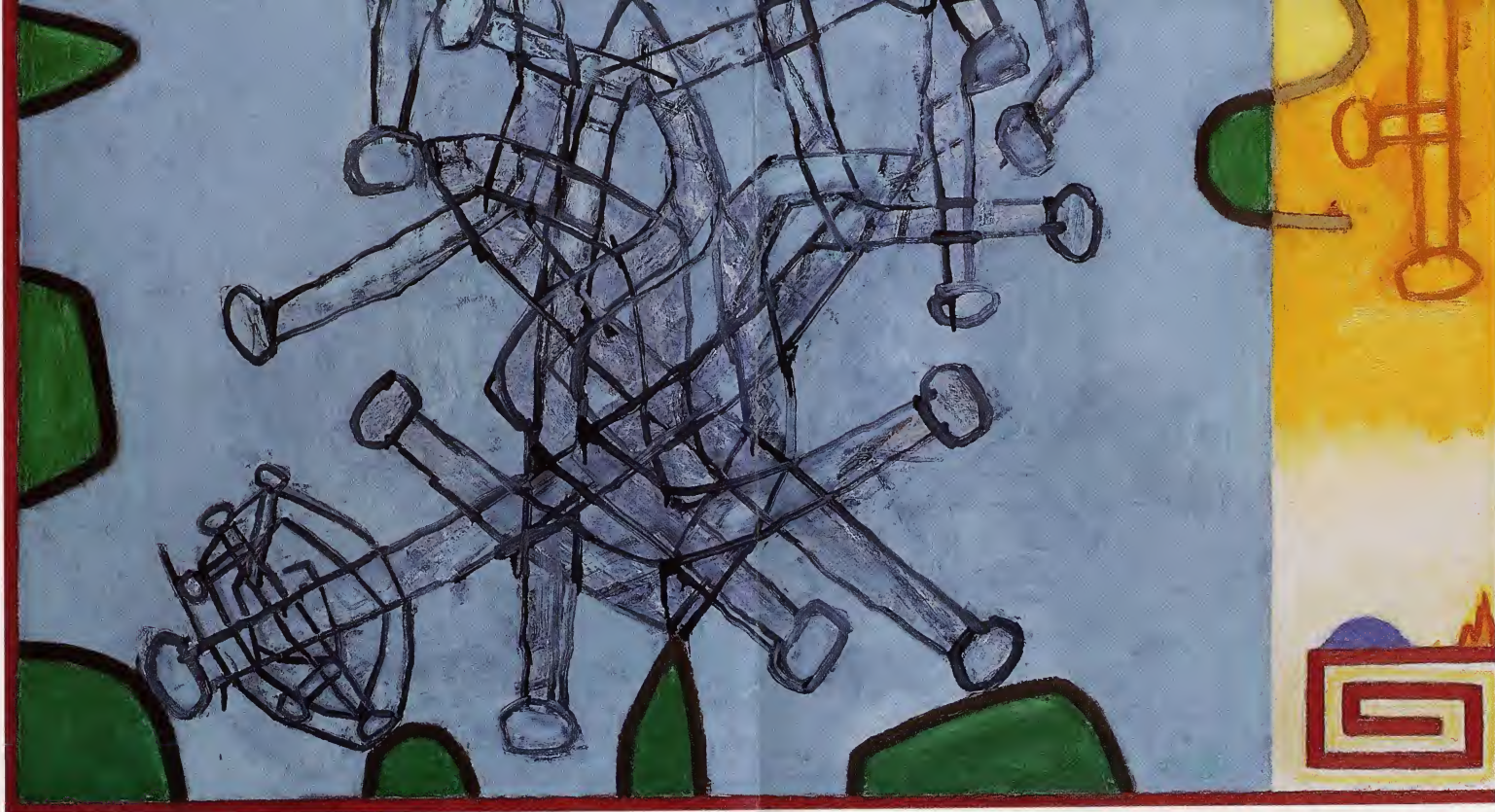
TO

MR. FRANK LOBDELL

FRANK LOBDELL

RECENT PAINTINGS, DRAWINGS, PRINTS





"Winter I," 1990

Oil on canvas, 60" x 48"

SEPTEMBER 4 to OCTOBER 13, 1990

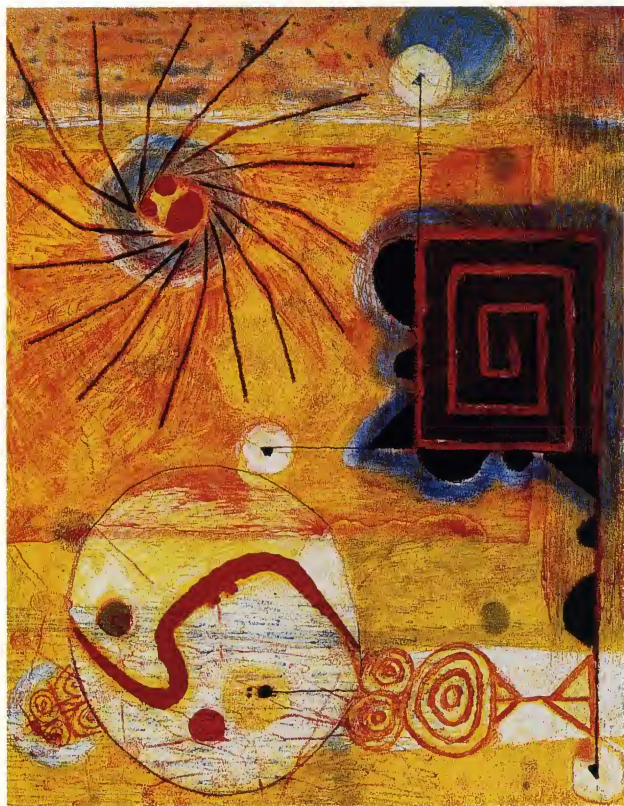
TUES., WED., THURS., FRI. 11:00 to 5:00, SAT. NOON to 4:00

CAMPBELL-THIEBAUD GALLERY

645-647 CHESTNUT STREET, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94133

TELEPHONE (415) 441-8680

Reception for the artist Tuesday, September 4, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.



FRANK LOBDELL



LIBRARY

LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

January 21 - February 16, 1969

OCT 24 1969

San Francisco Museum of Art

19.

Since World War II Frank Lobdell has been associated with one or another of the Bay Area's important art schools. First, at the California School of Fine Arts, he was a student under Clyfford Still. Later he was an instructor there and then Chairman of its graduate program. In 1965 Lobdell was appointed artist-in-residence at Stanford University. The following year he joined the permanent faculty, where he continues to teach. His numerous one-man shows include the Martha Jackson Gallery, New York; the de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco; Galerie Bendor, Geneva; Galerie Anderson-Mayor, Paris; and a major twenty-year retrospective exhibition organized by the Pasadena Art Museum, 1966, which traveled to Stanford University.

This exhibition concentrates on work from 1966 and 1967, notably the lithographs and hand-colored prints from the artist's Tamarind Lithography Workshop Grant of 1966. It includes a major canvas of the following year, *Summer 1967: In Memory of James Budd Dixon*. The artist produced a great many lithographs during this grant period, but only those whose imagery relates specifically to the great painting of the succeeding year have been selected for the exhibition.

In most cases the viewer will find that the lithographs and hand-colored prints separate into clusters of two and three works, where one can follow an original statement, then a unique colored alternative, and finally, a second and usually conclusive lithograph. Lobdell utilized the Workshop's artisan-printers as extensions of his own hands and mind; he used their technique to make reversals, to make transfers to additional plates, to extend the margins of a print, and in every other way to permit him to exploit his visual imagination.

A familial relationship exists between all Lobdell forms and symbols from whatever era. Those utilized in the current work, however, tend to be of comparatively recent derivation. The "skull" form to be seen in all of the prints except 1710, is also to be found in the left and upper center of the painting. This symbol first appeared in the late fifties but has recurred sporadically. The "limb" or "boomerang" form of the composite symbol in the upper left center has been an element of Lobdell's visual vocabulary for even longer, but has tended to become integrated with other symbols since late 1964.

These visual elements and their mutations, variations and repetitions recur throughout the lithographic work and are reiterated in the large canvas of the following year.

The central image from *In Memory of James Budd Dixon*, is to be seen in 1742 and the double sheet lithograph 1747, as well as in other clusters of works. The figurative basis for the symbol now seems clear, with limb-elements crossing and interacting, at once suggesting a human Icarus who has flown too close to the mystery of the sun, while also referring back in time to the powerful fallen spirit-forms which have inhabited Lobdell's picture space since the early fifties. In many cases a variety of related images, often reversals or combinations of one or another of the above mentioned forms, can be recognized in both the lithographs and the large canvas.

Frank Lobdell is a nervous, unsettled man, unconcerned with style or the superficialities. He is clearly aware that being an artist is a way of life—an emotional experience and commitment. He has learned to think in the medium rather than in words. His drawing, lithographic and painting experience is one of trial and error, eternally balanced by his searching eye. He is certain that the dignity of man rests in his creative power. When asked about the religious quality that is often imputed to his work, he responds in ethical terms. He says that each man must face his own problems and his own imperfections. He recognizes that the task of sorting out that which is relevant and real in one's own life is not done in a day or in a single work, but that it is the subject of one's life work.

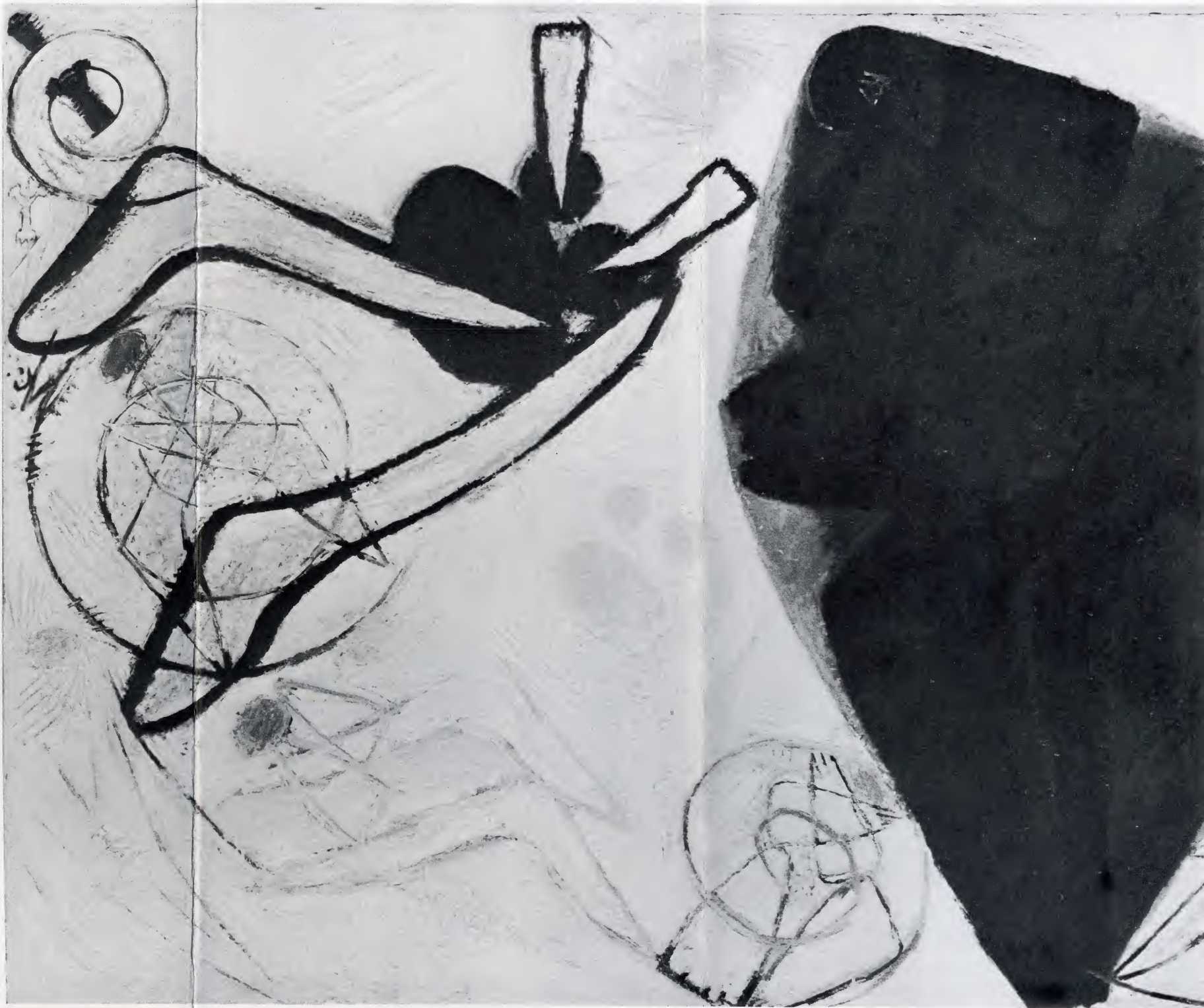
This exhibition probes deeply into the artist's creative process. Lobdell reveals himself in the manipulation of the vocabulary of his art, in a sense staking his own identity on the power and passion of the work. Lobdell utilized the lithographic medium as a method of concentrated study and exploitation of forms and symbols that have involved him throughout his mature life. The planographic flatness of the prints cannot be translated into his anguished, multi-level, searching paint process. Yet the compulsive symbols reappear in the painting even though tortured, painted out, excised—an intense reminder of the real force and power of visual symbols to express romantic, tragic and passionate feelings.

GERALD NORDLAND

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

Unless otherwise noted, all works are lithographs and are lent by the artist.

1. *1707 German Etching Paper* 1966
20¼ x 27⅞" 19/20
2. *1707 A German Etching Paper* 1966
20⅞ x 27" 14/20
3. *Untitled* 1966
hand-colored impression of 1707 A
lithograph and crayon
20 x 27"
4. *1707 B German Etching Paper* 1966
20 x 27"
5. *1708 German Etching Paper* 1966
27⅞ x 20⅞" 17/20
6. *Untitled* 1966
hand-colored impression of 1708
lithograph and crayon
26¾ x 20"
7. *1708 A* 1966
27 x 20" 5/20
8. *1709 German Etching Paper* 1966
27 x 20⅞" 14/20
9. *1709 A German Etching Paper* 1966
27⅞ x 20¼" 12/20
10. *1709 II German Etching Paper* 1966
27 x 20" 12/20
11. *1710 German Etching Paper* 1966
27⅞ x 20⅞" 16/20
12. *Untitled* 1966
hand-colored impression of 1710
lithograph, pastel and crayon
26⅞ x 20½"
13. *1710 A Magnani Italia* 1966
27 x 20" 16/20
14. *1711 A* 1966
20 x 27" 17/20
15. *1712* 1966
22⅞ x 30" 19/20
16. *1713 Magnani Italia* 1966
20¾ x 30½" 8/20
17. *1713 State II German Etching Paper* 1966
22⅞ x 30⅞" 17/20
18. *1713 State III* 1966
23 x 32½" 1/20
19. *1742* 1966
32 x 20⅞" 9/20
20. *1742 State II German Etching Paper* 1966
32 x 20" 18/20
21. *1743 State I* 1966
19 x 25⅞" 17/20
22. *Untitled* 1966
hand-colored impression of 1743 State I
lithograph and crayon
19¾ x 25½"
23. *1743 State II* 1966
19¼ x 25½" 5/20
24. *1746* 1966
19¼ x 25¼" 4/20
25. *1746 State II Copperplate Deluxe* 1966
19⅞ x 25⅞" 18/20
26. *1747* 1966
22⅞ x 54½" 17/20
27. *Untitled* 1966
20 x 27" 14/20
28. *Summer 1967: In Memory of James Budd Dixon*
oil on canvas
90½ x 173½"





FRANK LOBDELL

PAINTINGS and DRAWINGS 1955 - 1973

OCTOBER 17 - NOVEMBER 16, 1974

LIBRARY

OCT 25 1974

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
MUSEUM OF ART

EXHIBITION LIST

PAINTINGS

DECEMBER 1955 oil on canvas 68x90 inches
APRIL 1957 oil on canvas 70x60 inches
GRAY II 1957 oil on canvas 76x70 inches
UNTITLED 1958 oil on canvas 70x58 inches
JUNE 1959 oil on canvas 74x71 inches
BLACK EDGE III March 1962 oil on canvas 70x60 inches
BLACK EDGE IV September 1962 oil on canvas 70x60 inches
MAY 1965 oil on canvas 57x47 inches
OCTOBER 1965 oil on canvas 57x43 inches
JANUARY 1971 oil on canvas 84x64 inches
WINTER 1972 oil on canvas 84x120 inches
*SPRING 1972 oil on canvas 84x64 inches
*SUMMER 1973 oil on canvas 84x120 inches
*FALL 1973 oil on canvas 84x120 inches

DRAWINGS

DRAWING I 1961 ink, tempera 12¾x17½ inches
DRAWING I 1964 ink, crayon, tempera, pencil 17x13 inches
DRAWING II 1964 ink, tempera, pencil 14x10¾ inches
DRAWING III 1964 ink, tempera, pencil 14x17 inches
DRAWING IV 1964 ink, tempera, pencil 18x23½ inches
DRAWING V 1964 ink, tempera, pencil 18x23½ inches
DRAWING VI 1964 ink, tempera, pencil, crayon 18x23½ inches
I 1972 ink, gouache, ballpoint 13½x11 inches
13'8'72 ink, gouache 11½x14½ inches
10'8'72 ink, gouache, pencil 11½x14½ inches
7'8'72 ink, gouache, pencil 12x19 inches
20'8'72 ink, gouache 12x19 inches
21'8'72 ink, gouache 12x19 inches
26'8'72 ink, gouache 12x19 inches
II 1972 ink, gouache 11½x14½ inches
III 1972 ink, gouache, pencil 12x19 inches

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1949 *Poems and Drawings*, Kenneth Sawyer . . . Frank Lobdell. Published by Bern Porter.
1960 Martha Jackson Gallery, New York, *Exhibition catalog for Lobdell 1953-1959*. Introduction by Erik Bauersfeld.
1965 Galerie Anderson-Mayer, Paris. *Exhibition catalog for Lobdell Paintings and Drawings*. Introduction by Michel Tapié.
1966 Pasadena Art Museum. *Exhibition catalog for Frank Lobdell, Paintings and Graphics 1948-1965*. Introduction by Walter Hopps.
1969 San Francisco Museum of Art. *Exhibition catalog for Frank Lobdell, 27 Lithographs and Large Paintings*. Introduction by Gerald Nordland.



FALL 1973
oil on canvas 84x120 inches



SPRING 1972
oil on canvas 84x64 inches



SUMMER 1973
oil on canvas 84x120 inches

BIOGRAPHY

- 1921 Born in Kansas City, Missouri. Lives in Palo Alto, California
- 1939 Studied with Cameron Booth at the St. Paul School of Fine Arts, St. Paul, Minnesota
- 1942-46 Served in the Army of the United States
- 1947-50 Studied at the California School of Fine Arts, San Francisco, California
- 1950 Studied at the Academie de la Grande Chaumière, Paris
- 1952 Established studio at 9 Mission Street, San Francisco, California
- 1957 Joined Faculty at the California School of Fine Arts, later known as the San Francisco Art Institute
- 1960 Nealie Sullivan Award, San Francisco Art Association
- 1963 Appointed Chairman, Graduate Program Committee, San Francisco Art Institute
- 1965 Artist in Residence, Stanford University, Stanford, California
- 1966 Fellow, Tamarind Lithography Workshop, Los Angeles, California
- Appointed Chairman, Graduate Program in Painting, Sculpture & Lithography at Stanford University, California
- 1971 A Knight of Mark Twain

SELECTED ONE-MAN EXHIBITIONS

- 1958 Martha Jackson Gallery, New York
- 1960 M.H. De Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco, California
- Martha Jackson Gallery, New York
- 1962 Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles, California
- 1963 Martha Jackson Gallery, New York
- 1964 Galerie D. Benador, Geneva
- 1965 Galerie Anderson-Mayer, Paris
- 1966 Pasadena Art Museum, Pasadena, California and Stanford Museum, California (Retrospective)
- 1969 San Francisco Museum of Art, California
- 1970 St. Mary's College, Moraga, California
- 1972 Martha Jackson Gallery, New York
- 1974 Martha Jackson Gallery, New York

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1949 Lucien Labaudt Gallery, San Francisco, California—Two-man exhibition with George Stillman
- 1955 III Bienal de Sao Paulo, Brazil
- 1958 International Art of a New Era, Osaka, Japan
- 1961 Pasadena Art Museum, Pasadena, California—Two-man exhibition of drawings with Richard Diebenkorn
- 1962 Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas *The Artists' Environment: West Coast*
- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York *Fifty California Artists*
- 1963 California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, California—Three-man exhibition of drawings with Elmer Bischoff and Richard Diebenkorn
- International Center of Aesthetic Research, Turin, Italy
- 1964 The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York *American Drawings*
- 1967 Henry Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington—*Drawings by Americans*
- 1969 Pasadena Art Museum, Pasadena, California *West Coast 1945-1969*
- 1970 Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven *Kompas 4 West Coast USA*
- 1971 The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. *32 Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting*
- Seibu Department Store, Tokyo, Japan *Martha Jackson Gallery Collection*
- 1972 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York *Whitney Painting Annual*
- 1973 University of Maryland Art Gallery, College Park, Maryland *The Private Collection of Martha Jackson*
- Finch College Art Museum, New York *The Private Collection of Martha Jackson*
- 1974 Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York *The Private Collection of Martha Jackson*
- University of Illinois at Champaign Urbana-Illinois *Contemporary American Painting and Sculpture*

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1942
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This comprehensive exhibition surveys three important periods in Frank Lobdell's distinguished sixty-year career, from the late 1940s to the present. On view will be many rarely exhibited and seminal works which together trace an extraordinary evolution in the creative process of one of America's preeminent abstract painters. The exhibition will occupy all three galleries during March 2002; additional images and commentary are provided in the show catalogue. A smaller selection of Lobdell's works will remain on view in our Modern gallery through April 27.

ARTIST'S FILE

Frank Lobdell

Three Phases, 1947 – 2001

MARCH 7 - 30, 2002

RECEPTION FOR THE ARTIST
THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 5:30 - 7:30PM

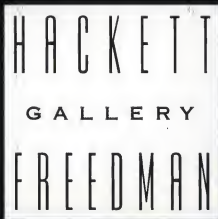
COLOR CATALOGUE WITH ESSAY BY BRUCE GUENTHER, \$45ppd.

EXHIBITION PREVIEW: www.hackettfreedmangallery.com

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415.362.7152 fax: 415.362.7182 e-mail: hfg@realart.com
HOURS: T-F: 10:30 - 5:30; SAT: 11 - 5

17 October 1947 32 x 38" oil on canvas, 1947

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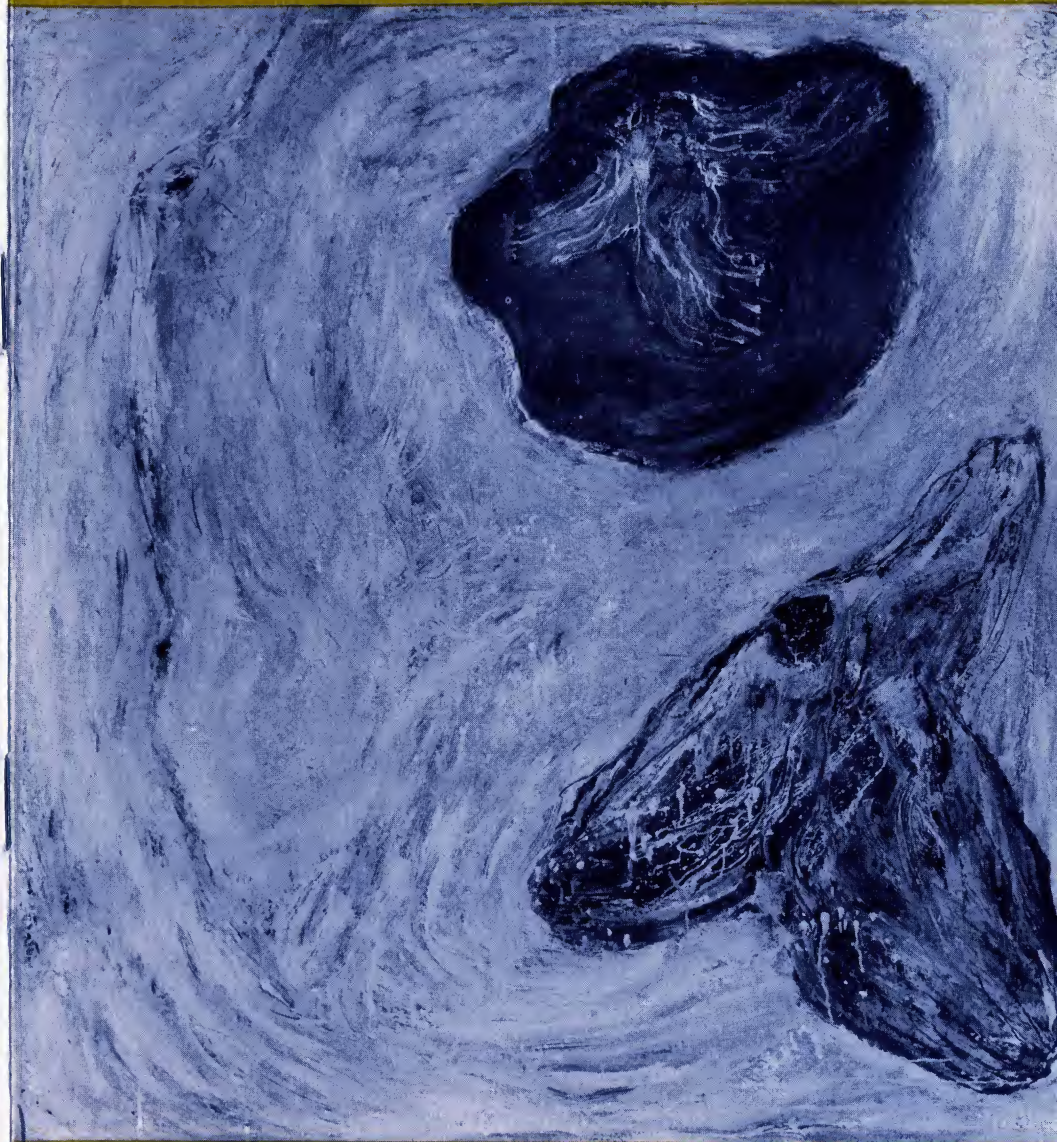
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LOBBDELL

APR 19 1960



LIBRARY
LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM
37

1953-1959



FRANK

LOBDELL

EXHIBITION
APRIL 19-MAY 7, 1960
MARTHA JACKSON GALLERY

CATALOG OF
PAINTINGS

1953-1959

AUGUST 1959

oil 61 x 37

INTRODUCTION

Human aspiration, goals, struggle and death are the thematic materials which comprise the central and governing idea in LOBDELL's painting. It is the idea which his work as a whole has attempted to develop and clarify. The religiousness of both the method and substance of the work lies in the relentless effort to illuminate this drama.

The extent to which the idea has been carried or explored in any one painting is represented by the total impact of the thematic images and their spacial environment. Everything on the canvas counts toward this end. By way of constant variation and innovation with this imagery LOBDELL seeks to clarify his idea and to point out and develop its complexity.

This attempt at fineness of meaning makes continuous use of duplicity and ambiguity. The struggle of opposites occurs throughout as



a means of adding to and vitalizing
the significance of an image.
A shape reaching upward
is at the same time striated with
a resistant effort downward;
a depth suddenly comes forward
to support or nourish what it had formerly
isolated or opposed.

The spacial context is molded in this manner so as to
have a continuous symbolic bearing upon the image.
In the long and thorough course of moulding,
the composite imagery becomes crystallized and
an ultimate simplicity is achieved.

The seriousness of the idea in these paintings and
the uncompromising manner in which this idea is adhered to
results in work whose look is dark and severe.
But the difficulty lies only in being willing
to enter the darkness and concentration of this work.
The images themselves are not cultish or remote.
It is not difficult to see where death lies,
or where an image reaches out of the dark to grapple
with an enigmatic object of promise,
or wrestle with insecurity,
or remain suspended between a pair of
almost imperceptible alternatives.
There is considerable dramatic intensity and scope
involved in the complexity that emerges
from this treatment of the idea.

The thematic material is all too recognizable
perhaps, and the pursuit of it in these paintings
is unrelieved by aesthetic or sensationalistic diversions.
But surely it is not relief or modification or dilution
that we want to impose upon this material
so long as there is still an opportunity to face and understand it;
or while it is still so rare
that an artist is willing
to devote himself thoroughly to the task.

ERIK BAUERSFELD
San Francisco, California
March, 1960



DECEMBER 1955
oil 67 x 90

The uniqueness of Frank Lobdell's painting sets him apart from many others working today—his goals, his achievements, his subject matter remains mystical and strange.

Although he achieved a personal expression by 1953, he exhibited only in occasional group shows, preferring to concentrate his energies and perfect his statement.

It was not until 1960 that he agreed to hold full-scale one-man exhibitions. The first of these was held at the M. H. De Young Memorial Museum in San Francisco. The exhibition included works from 1953 through 1959.

The early works are not included in this present exhibition—but a complete list of all important oils on canvas is given below. Paintings included in the present exhibition are indicated by numbers.

CATALOG OF PAINTINGS

1953

DRAWING: BLACK & WHITE 1

oil 80 x 70

exhibited: Martha Jackson Gallery, May 1958

DRAWING IN BLACK AND WHITE

oil 80 x 70

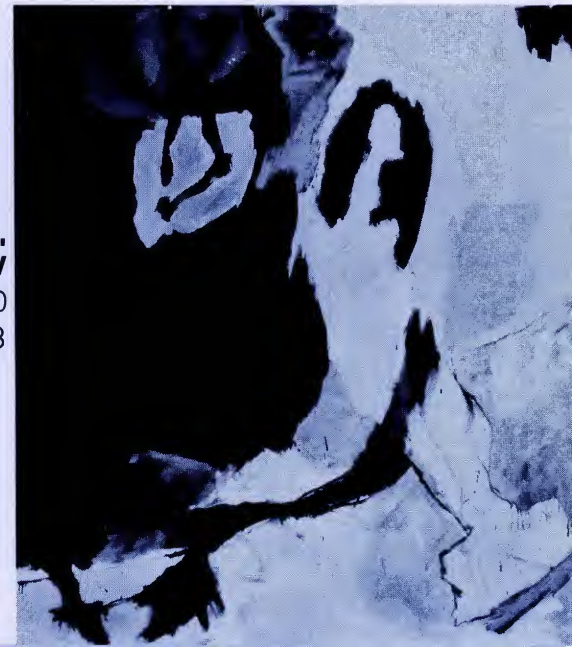
1953



DRAWING IN RED, BLACK AND YELLOW

oil 75 x 70

1953



DRAWING: BLACK, RED AND YELLOW 2

oil 75 x 80

exhibited: Martha Jackson Gallery, May 1958

NOVEMBER 1953

oil 69½ x 74

1954

MAY 1954

oil

collection: Ferus Gallery

DRAWING: 3 (APRIL 1954)

oil

collection: Michel Tapié

DRAWING: 4 (MARCH 1954)

oil

collection: Michel Tapié

WINTER 1954

oil

exhibited: Osaka International Festival:
INTERNATIONAL ART OF A NEW ERA
April-December 1958

collection: artist

1955

JANUARY 1955

oil

collection: artist

FEBRUARY 1955

oil

collection: artist

1 MAY 1955

oil 56 x 70

JUNE 1959

oil 74 x 71



2 DECEMBER 1955
oil 67 x 90

1956

JUNE 1956

oil
collection: Ann Lobdell

JULY 1956

oil
collection: artist

SUMMER 1956

oil
collection: artist

1957

WINTER 1957

oil
collection: Mason Wells

GRAY I 1957

oil 75 x 70
exhibited: Martha Jackson Gallery, May 1958
Walker Art Center: SIXTY AMERICAN PAINTERS, 1960
collection: Martha Jackson

3 GRAY II 1957
oil 76 x 70

exhibited: Martha Jackson Gallery, May 1958

4 BLACK PAINTING (FEBRUARY 1957)
oil 70 x 60 $\frac{1}{4}$

exhibited: Martha Jackson Gallery, May 1958
collection: J. Patrick Lannan

5 APRIL 1957
oil 70 x 60

6 AUGUST 1957
oil 60 x 70

7 DECEMBER 1957
oil 74 x 70

1958

8 FALL 1958
oil 70 x 92

9 DECEMBER 1958
oil 59 x 70

1959

10 FEBRUARY 1959
oil 59 x 70

11 APRIL 1959
oil 74 x 71

12 JUNE 1959
oil 74 x 71

13 SUMMER 1959
oil 68 x 91

14 AUGUST 1959
oil 61 x 37

15 OCTOBER 1959
oil 48 x 49 $\frac{1}{2}$
collection: Dr. Daniel Schneider

BIOGRAPHY

- 1921 Born in Kansas City, Missouri.
- 1938-1939 Studied painting with Cameron Booth at the St. Paul School of Art, St. Paul, Minnesota.
- 1942-1946 Served as a Lieutenant of Infantry, U.S. Army.
- 1947-1950 Attended the California School of Fine Arts, San Francisco.
- 1948 Artists' Council Prize, 12th Annual Drawing and Print Exhibition of the San Francisco Art Association, San Francisco Museum of Art.
- 1949 Poems by Kenneth Sawyer, Drawings by Frank Lobdell. Published by Benn Porter.
- 1950 San Francisco Bank Prize, 69th Annual Oil, Tempera and Sculpture Exhibition of the San Francisco Art Association, San Francisco Museum of Art.
San Francisco Art Association Purchase Prize, 14th Annual Drawing and Print Exhibition of the San Francisco Art Association, San Francisco Museum of Art.
- 1955 Invited Exhibitor, Pacific Coast Art, III Biennial, Sao Paulo, Brazil.
- 1957 Member of the faculty of the California School of Fine Arts, San Francisco, as instructor in under-graduate and graduate painting.
- 1958 Exhibited at the Martha Jackson Gallery, New York City.
- 1960 Nealie Sullivan Annual Award, Bequest of Adeline Kent Howard. One-Man Show at M. H. De Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco.



APRIL 1959

oil 74 x 71

PRICE GRAB: HOW MUCH CULTURE COSTS
PLUGGED IN, 6

LITTLE ITALY IN THE PEARL
DINING, 19

AEROSMITH: STILL FLYING
MUSIC, 14

The Oregonian



From Goya and
Picasso to war and
politics, Bay Area
master Frank
Lobdell absorbed
everything to
make great
abstract paintings.

CURRENTS OF ABSTRACTION

PAGE 11

Currents of abstraction

From Goya and Picasso to Diebenkorn and politics, Bay Area great Frank Lobdell absorbed everything to make impressive abstract paintings



M. LEE FATHERREE/COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND THE HACKETT-FREEDMAN GALLERY

Lobdell's darker and more serious early work, like "17 October 1947," was influenced by his experiences in World War II.

By D.K. ROW
THE OREGONIAN

Read about the notable abstract painters to emerge during the post-World War II era, and you'll likely come across such greats as Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Clyfford Still and Richard Diebenkorn, among others.

But you probably won't find Frank Lobdell, an esteemed though not widely known artist from San Francisco.

Like the character actor whose

greatest admirers are his peers, Lobdell, 82, is an insider's favorite. But the new Portland Art Museum exhibit opening Saturday, "Frank Lobdell: Making and Meaning," attempts to add a new chapter to the history books, ambitiously arguing that Lobdell is an artist of the first tier, not merely a very respected name below the centerfold.

Assembled by the museum's chief curator, Bruce Guenther, "Making and Meaning" is the Portland version of the survey organized by the Fine

Arts Museums of San Francisco. It's not a big show in terms of numbers; there are 23 paintings and eight lithographs by Lobdell. But those 31 works, particularly the paintings, capture the essence of Lobdell's distinctive, sometimes uneasy power and depth as an artist.

Lobdell's abstract painting is not the famous recognizable action drips and drools of Pollock, nor the lyrically grunty gesturalism of de Kooning. And as exquisite as his work often is, it has never consistently possessed the

gentle enticement of his more-famous Bay Area colleague and regular drawing partner, Diebenkorn.

Instead, Lobdell's work is a complex weaving of various influences. He's absorbed seamlessly, in both abstract and figurative terms, the dark theatrics and bloody somberness of Francisco de Goya, the stirring physicality of Pablo Picasso and the textural crudeness of Still. Though his recent work is more playful and less severe than his early paintings, psychic

Please turn to Page 12

q & a

'There's always something new'

By D.K. ROW
THE OREGONIAN

Frank Lobdell has been making art for 60 years, and though he's had a lifetime of exhibits and heady art world experiences, he has no intention of stopping anytime soon.

Nearly every day, Lobdell, the subject of a survey at the Portland Art Museum, "Frank Lobdell: Making and Meaning," takes a 15-minute bus ride from his home in the Cow Hollow section of San Francisco to his studio in North Beach. The 82-year-old artist paints, draws, reads and listens to music — the same routine that has helped make the Bay Area master one of the more accomplished abstract painters to emerge during the mid-20th century, in the same league as Mark Rothko, Richard Diebenkorn and Jackson Pollock.

Lobdell took time out from making art to talk about his career and life.

Q: You've been making art for decades. What keeps you going?

A: Well (laughs), it's a little like, oh, gambling. You're hoping the next turn of the wheel brings something new. It does occasionally. You get lucky. There's always something new to do. I don't think you ever finish anything.

Q: You have lived in the Bay Area since the end of World War II. Some of your contemporaries in San Francisco left for New York in the '50s and '60s when New York was becoming the art capital of the world. Why did you stay?

A: Circumstance. Mostly economics. I think survival is the key to all of this. You locate where you can produce work and also survive.

Q: Why do you think the abstract painters on the East Coast became more famous than their counterparts on the West Coast?

A: They were in the (art world) marketplace. The magazines and the art journals were also there, so there was a lot more attention paid to New York. But that's always been the case, not just in painting, but in other ventures as well.

Q: Have you ever been to Portland? If so, what did you think?

A: Yes, but it was years ago. I think 1947 or '48. It was very positive. I re-



M. LEE FATHERREE

member the painter I was most impressed with then was C.S. Price. I remember being curious about his work though I hadn't seen much. I met a number of people in Portland who owned works by him... I was there because we — me and four or five painters from the Bay Area — were showing at Reed College.

Q: Your painting has experienced several different stages and styles. What, if anything, is common to all of them?

A: I think discovery, self-discovery, runs throughout the work... How do I explain this? I'm sure I'll think of better answers for this tomorrow! The whole thing is about a process of developing your own capabilities, whatever strengths you have, improving your instincts.

Q: Do you see much contemporary art?

A: You know, I don't. I don't look at much of the art journals, either. So much of what I see... well, it doesn't help me much (laughs).

Q: You taught for a long time at Stanford, as well as at other colleges. Was teaching another inspiration or just a way to make a living?

A: Well, both, actually. I don't miss teaching because so many times I would wake up at 3 a.m. thinking about a student's problems. Now I wake up with this painting I'm working on in my mind and trying to work out something that's bothering me. So I don't miss the teaching. But it was a matter of survival, too. I was teaching because at the same time I was show-

ing, exhibiting. It was a tightrope that gave me a way of keeping my freedom.

Q: Could you describe your art regimen?

A: I'm up at 5 or 5:30 a.m. I try to be at the studio by 7:30 or 8 a.m. and I work until 11:30 a.m. or almost noon. I have lunch. I go back to work at maybe 2 p.m., and that goes on until... it varies depending on how the work is going.

Q: You've made countless paintings, prints and other artworks. Certainly some are more significant to you than others.

A: All of them are meaningful. It depends on the moment, too. For example, right now I'm working on a few ideas that are a little close to a series of dance paintings I made. I stop working on a series of works when I find myself repeating something, when I'm not thinking. I'll drop it for the time being — with the idea of possibly picking it up later on. I've done that throughout my career.

Q: A lot of your art has been influenced by events of the times and ideas outside fine art. Do you think those influences are important to becoming a good artist?

A: I think one of the attributes to cultivate most is curiosity about all kinds of painting and all kinds of music, dance and forms of expression. Wherever there is an expression of a human side of things, I think that should be a matter of interest. You just absorb all of this. And then it'll all come out.

Continued from Page 11

weight — often provoked by world events and politics — often has bathed Lobdell's rich surfaces and abstract forms.

Distinctive, too, is Lobdell the man. Born in Kansas City, Mo., he was raised in Minnesota and attended the California School of Fine Arts (now the San Francisco Art Institute). A quiet, constant worker, he doesn't possess the cinematic personality of Still, Pollock or de Kooning. Nor is he cut from the romantic and tragic cloth of Mark Rothko, who committed suicide. He's the working-man Gene Hackman to these other leading stars.

Lobdell also is something of an outsider geographically. Most important artists who emerged during the post-World War II period in America lived in New York City, which became the art capital of the world by the late '50s. Even many of Lobdell's San Francisco contemporaries eventually moved to that center of artistic power.

But Lobdell stayed in the Bay Area, where he taught at nearby colleges from 1957 until 1991, notably at Stanford University for about 25 years.

Though Lobdell's work offers bits of everyone and everything from the cubist-inspired surrealism of Joan Miró to the primitivism of Paleolithic drawings, his primary influences, technically and spiritually, are Picasso, Still and World War II.

Lobdell was drawn to Picasso's approach and perplexing visions, which he saw firsthand in 1940 during a Chicago trip to see the Spaniard's retrospective. According to Timothy Anglin Burgard, Picasso's work, especially his anti-Spanish Civil War painting "Guernica," proved to Lobdell that art could be more than provocation. It could be powerful and rousing, "a meaningful act and subject."

World War II was important because the horrors Lobdell witnessed in Germany haunted him, notably the discovery of charred bodies burned alive by German soldiers in a barn at Gardelegen. These war experiences so profoundly affected Lobdell that some critics argue that the absence of human beings in his brown and cinder-colored early paintings owe their inspiration to the artist's war experiences.

The biggest influence on Lobdell was Still, who taught at the California School of Fine Arts. Lobdell was never a student of Still's, but he saw Still's paintings, which were famous for their heavy, husky surfaces and barely distinguishable forms. For Still, the painting surface was his focal point, not representation and narrative. The painting was really a crafted object, a metaphor for the struggle to transform the physical world into the spiritual one.

Though it presents a modest number of works from Lobdell's total output, the new exhibit manages to present an accurate overview of the artist's evolution, which began

preview

Frank Lobdell:
Making and Meaning

Where: Portland Art Museum, 1219 S.W. Park Ave.

Hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Tuesdays-Wednesdays and
Saturdays; 10 a.m.-8 p.m.
Thursdays-Fridays; noon-5
p.m. Sundays

Admission: \$15 adults; \$13
seniors and students

Closes: Aug. 29



M. LEE FATHERREE/COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND THE HACKETT-FREEDMAN GALLERY
Lobdell's later work, like "11.17.1998 (Pier 70)," is notable for its exuberant use of color.

Continued from Page 12

with a purely abstract style, morphed into a period that incorporated the figure with regularity, and then to a freer, more expansive color-saturated approach even later.

Guenther has separated the early and midcareer works from Lobdell's later pieces so as to clearly delineate this progression. The early and mid-career work includes several seminal, politically inspired paintings, including "Summer 1967 (In Memory of James Budd Dixon)" and two works from his "Dance Series." All three were inspired by the social turmoil caused by the Vietnam War.

One of the exhibit's earliest paintings, "17 October 1947," is deeply gripping and directly influenced by Lobdell's experience in Germany. It's an intense and emotionally wrenching work, a panoramic frieze of cubist-inspired fragments that Burgard mildly suggests is Lobdell's "Guernica." That's a high, overstated comparison. Still, those clumped, agonized shapes and the sonorous but sober colors collectively foretell the breadth of passion, politics and painterly texture that would consume Lobdell in the following decades.

That fullness reaches a slightly surprising present given Lobdell's early work. It's slightly jarring to compare the dark, tribal feel of "17 October

1947" to Lobdell's paintings from the '90s and as recently as 2002. Exuberant fields of green, yellow, purple and celadon now burst joyously, illuminating space, while machine- and human-inspired forms, torquing lines and circles commingle in an euphonic interplay. These later paintings feel exceptionally influenced by the gaiety of Miró — and perhaps by the confidence and exuberance that only a mature artist, long absorbed by his influences and life experiences, can feel.

Which brings us to the question of whether this studious exhibit flashes enough light on Lobdell's reputation to make it shine as bright as other more famous ones. That's uncertain. Reputations are made equally by commercial and critical success, and Lobdell, who was never savvy about self-marketing and didn't always have the strongest gallery representation, has eluded even the extensive appeal enjoyed by Diebenkorn in his home of San Francisco.

But as these 31 works show, a bigger audience and critical renaissance for Lobdell may be superficial issues. These resonant, deep-throated and often high-spirited paintings and lithographs represent an artistic commitment made and pursued on a daily basis. No matter who and how many see them, their meanings will last forever.

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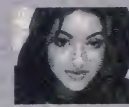


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OCTOBER 25 — NOVEMBER 25, 1981

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY

MALIBU, CALIFORNIA

OPENING RECEPTION: OCT. 25, 2-5 P.M.

FURTHER INFORMATION: 213/456-4225

The *Summer Mural* has always had an air of mystery about it. Painted nearly twenty years ago, it is Frank Lobdell's largest and least exhibited major painting.¹ For the last fourteen years stories about the big painting folded up in the back of Lobdell's Palo Alto studio² have been passed down by word of mouth from one set of his graduate students to the next, from painter to painter within the Bay Area art community. Occasionally his students and friends have prevailed upon him to open it up and show it for a day to invited guests.³ Once seen, the *Summer Mural* is not easily forgotten. In fact, it is not easy in any sense of the word. It is not easy to look at, not easily accessible to interpretation, and it certainly was not easy to paint.

Actually, Lobdell never intended to paint it at all. In May of 1961 he stapled the last twenty feet of a roll of six-foot wide canvas directly to one of the long wooden planked walls of his Embarcadero Street studio in San Francisco.⁴ His friend and New York dealer, Martha Jackson, had advised him that the canvas on that particular roll was of too light a weight to carry the impasto paint surfaces he was then

using. His original idea was to use the roll up by experimenting with a variety of images on the long gessoed surface and to possibly salvage smaller paintings later by simply cutting them out of the larger canvases.

Lobdell embarked on a process of gathering up many of the pictorial ideas he had been developing over the past few years. Once under way, the painting presented him with the challenge of unifying his various iconographic images and pictorial devices, summing up his development as an artist, in one ambitious statement. Lobdell worked on the big painting virtually every day for the next four months until its completion in early September, 1961. He had been doing a lot of drawing around that time — primarily gouache and ink on paper — and, as he worked on the *Summer Mural*, he continued to make "various notes," using whatever materials he had available. For studies in color, shirt-boards from a local laundry were cut up and drawn on with crayons. He used the crayon sketches as "working drawings," applying more or less directly to the problem-solving that was going on in the painting, investigating alternate solutions and ideas for different sections of the painting and recording ideas that were spin-offs of the actual work at hand.

By the end of the summer Lobdell had two rows of ten crayon drawings tacked up alongside the big canvas as well as numerous sketches in other materials scattered around the studio. The crayon drawings, all but two of which have never been previously exhibited, indicate some of the thinking that went into the painting, and are the only examples Lobdell has salvaged from the original set of twenty. The gouache and ink drawings are presented as indications of some of the pictorial ideas Lobdell pulled together and included in the larger composition.

In many ways the *Summer Mural* has come to symbolize the scale and quality of Frank Lobdell's artistic pursuits. His art and his concept of the function and purpose of the artist have profoundly influenced younger painters in the Bay Area for the last twenty-five years. The *Summer Mural* can be seen as a proclamation of his artistic maturity — he had just turned 40 when he finished it — which presented his vision as a force to be contended

with: artistically ambitious, intense, difficult, rewarding and mysterious.

The Pepperdine University Art Gallery is honored to exhibit the *Summer Mural*; not in an attempt to dispel any of the mystery or the legend of the painting, but to present it for all to see. And to think about.

—Robbie Conal,
Artist in Residence, University of Georgia

Frank Lobdell was born in Kansas City, Missouri in 1921. He studied at the St. Paul School of Fine Arts in Minnesota from 1938-39; at the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco from 1947-50. In 1950 he went to Paris and was associated with the Académie de la Grande Chaumière for a year. He returned to San Francisco in 1951 and taught at the California School of Fine Arts (soon to be the San Francisco Art Institute) from 1957-65. Since 1965 he has been teaching at Stanford University, where he is the Chairman of the Graduate Studio Program.

Acknowledgements—

The gallery would like to thank Frank Lobdell for his cooperation in every aspect of the development of this exhibition. Our thanks go to Terry St. John, Associate Curator of Art at the Oakland Museum for his help with the text of this announcement.

Gallery Hours—

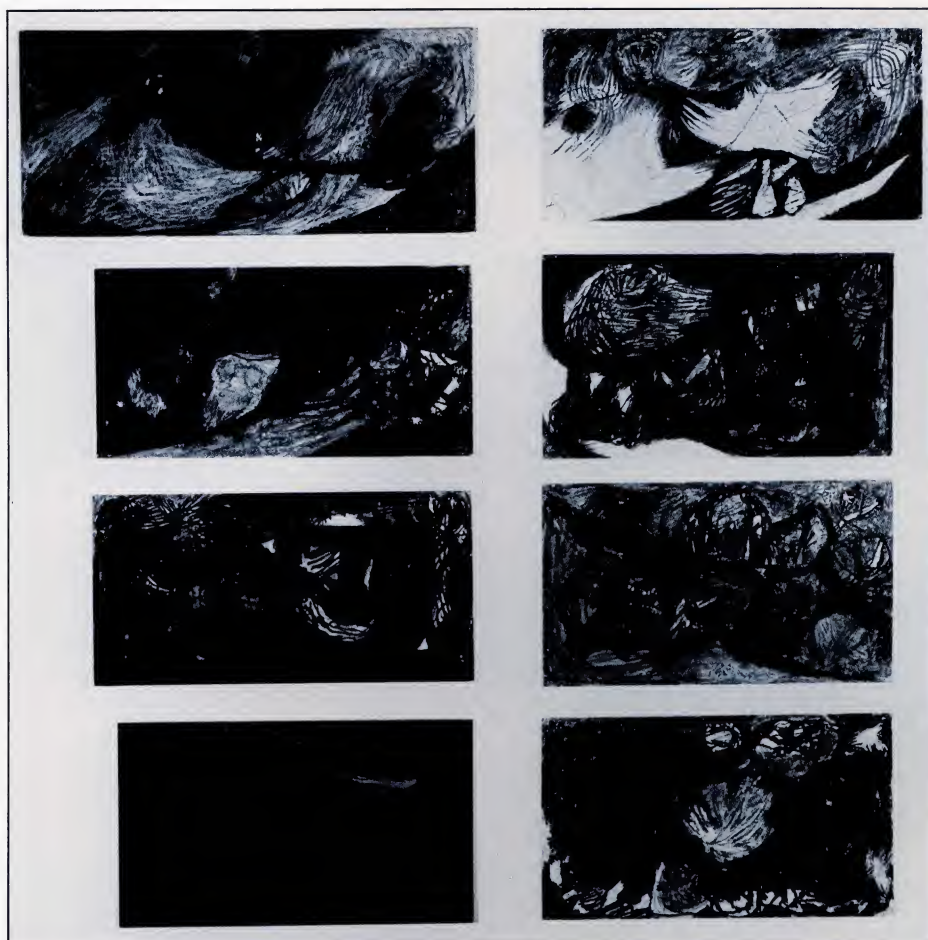
Sunday: 2-10 pm
Monday through Thursday: 8 am-11 pm
Friday: 8 am-5 pm
Saturday: 10 am-5 pm
Gallery will close holidays and April 17-25

1. Exhibition history of the *Summer Mural*:
—1963, Martha Jackson Gallery, New York, N.Y.
—1966, March 15 - April 10, Pasadena Art Museum, Pasadena, CA. Included in retrospective of paintings and graphics from 1948-1965.
—1966, May 1-31, Stanford Museum, Stanford, CA. Apart from some deletions, the same retrospective exhibition as above.

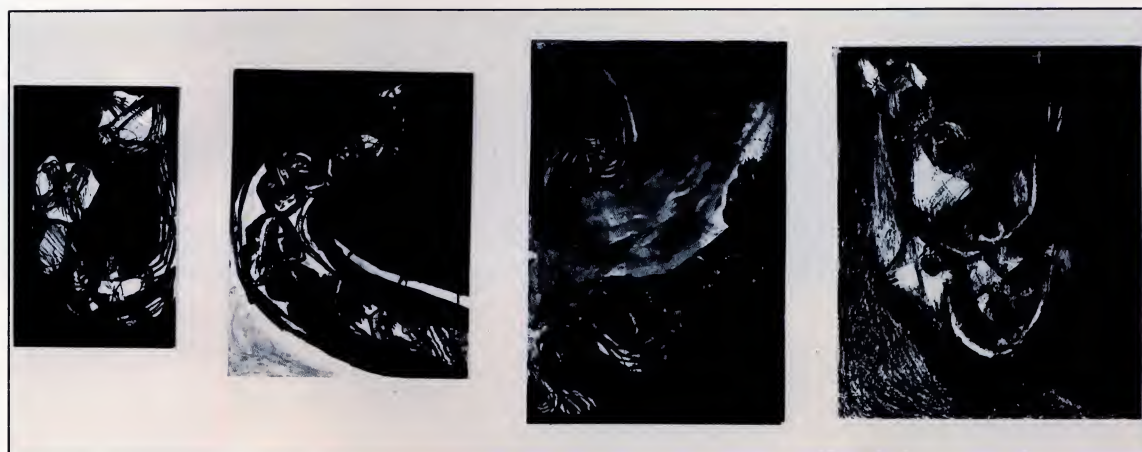
2. In 1966, Walter Hopps, then the director of the Pasadena Art Museum, designed a stretcher that folded in half, with a cardboard roll placed in the middle, for easier moving and storage of the giant painting. The minor cracking in the middle of the canvas is due to this folding and unfolding process.

3. After one of these showings, in June, 1977, Lobdell kept the painting open in his studio for a few weeks — "to think about it for a while" — and repainted a section on the far left side of the canvas.

4. If one looks closely, one can see horizontal ridges in the paint surface of the *Summer Mural* (especially in the dark areas in the upper right section of the painting) that correspond to the planking on the walls of the studio.



Working drawings. Summer 1961. Crayon on cardboard.



Related drawings. 1959-1961. Gouache and ink on paper, crayon on paper.



FRANK LOBDELL/SUMMER MURAL



1961 AND RELATED DRAWINGS/OCT



TOBER 25-NOVEMBER 25, 1981/PEPPE



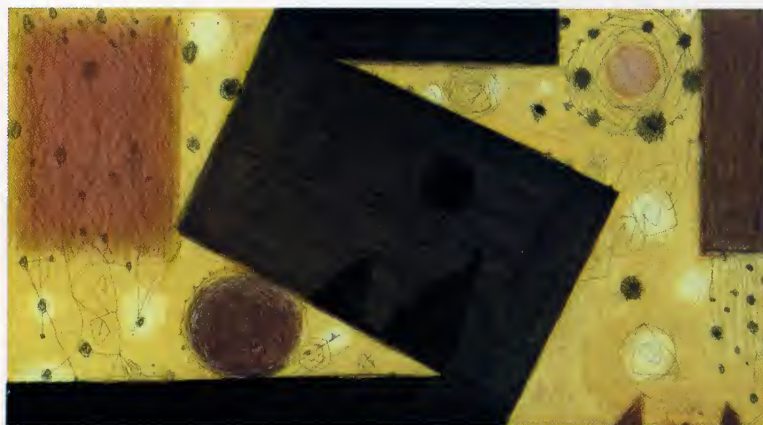
Summer Mural. May-September 1961. 68" x 240". Oil on canvas.

RDINE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY

FRANK
LOBDELL,

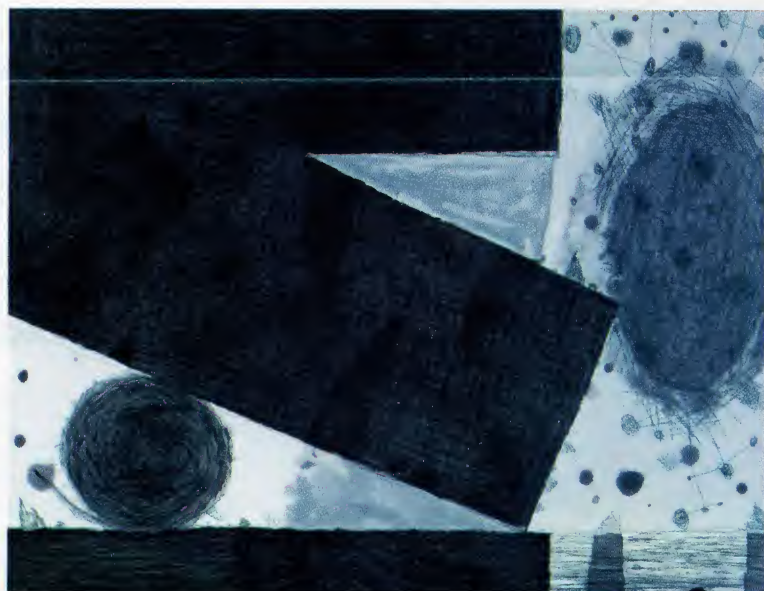
FRANK LOBDELL
color aquatints, 1983

3-6-83
aquatint with hard- and
soft ground etching; plate
size 14" x 18" printed on BFK Rives
white 22½" x 30"
in an edition of 33.



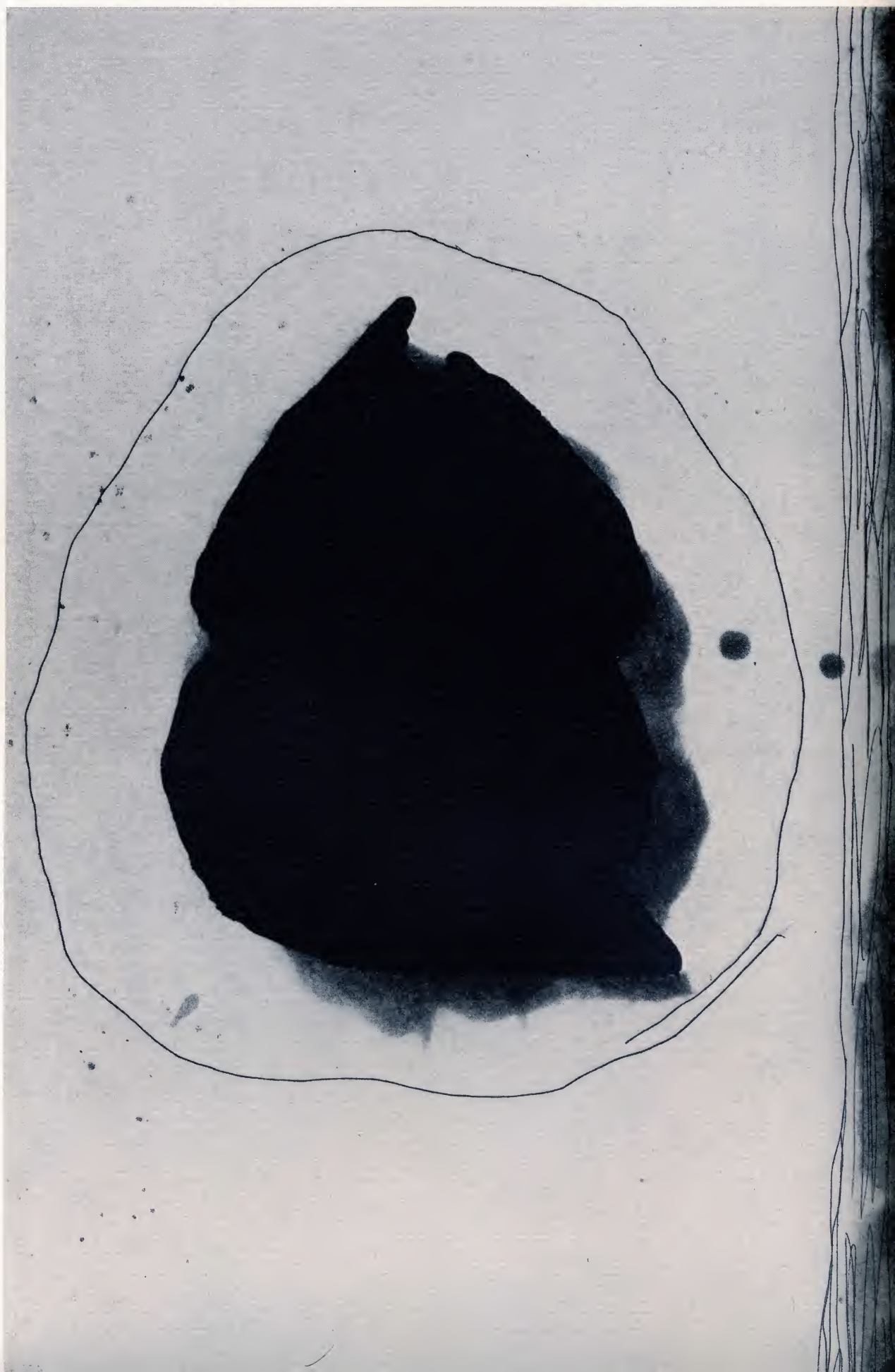
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Drawings

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ARTIST: Frank Lobdell
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Tamarind Fellowship: June - July 1966



Biomorphic symbols and forms dominate the images of thirty-two lithographs created by San Francisco artist Frank Lobdell during his stay at Tamarind. These recur and modify in positive and negative variations as the artist reversed and restated the evocation organic shapes for which he is noted.

During the first month of his grant, Lobdell worked almost exclusively with crayon, attacking the stone to produce grainy, energetic, crackling lines. Later he introduced subtle washes as well. Twenty-six of the lithographs are black and white; six are in color.

Lobdell used a variety of papers, selecting value and texture to amplify his image. He also worked in several different sizes -- 15" x 22", 22" x 30", and in one print joined two sheets of paper together to make a lithograph 22" x 54½" in size. This latter work, Tamarind No, 1747, is a grey and black lithograph, enhanced with touches of yellow and blue. It was drawn on two stones (half of the image on each) to produce this outsize panel.

The works are untitled and are identified by the Tamarind numbers which appear in pencil on the back. The artist preferred to sign on the face with a pencilled "L" and sign in full on the back of the print.

Lobdell collaborated closely with printer-fellows Kinji Akagawa, Bob Bigelow, Ernest de Soto, John Dowell, Bob Evermon and Jack Lemon, under the technical supervision of Clifford Smith, Studio Manager.

Frank Lobdell was born in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1921. He joined the faculty of the San Francisco Art Institute in 1957, becoming chairman of its graduate program in 1963. In 1965 he was appointed Artist in Residence at Stanford University, joining its permanent faculty in 1966.

Lobdell has had numerous one-man shows, including exhibitions at the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York, the De Young Memorial Museum in San Francisco, the Galerie D. Bendor in Geneva and the Galerie Anderson-Mayer in Paris. A retrospective exhibition organized by the Pasadena Art Museum in 1966 covered the artist's work from 1945 to 1965.

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LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

OCT 20 1967

LOBDELL

ONE-MAN

FRANK LOBDELL

PAINTINGS 1969-1971

Preview: FEB. 29, 1972 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Exhibition Dates: MARCH 1-25, 1972



ONE-MAN

LIBRARY
LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

MAR 17 1972

FRANK LOBDELL



In locating Frank Lobdell's work in the context of today's advanced art it is important to know that his first fully mature work appeared in the period 1948-1950—placing it at the climatic moment in the emergence of what is implied in the phrase "New American Painting" as associated with the work of Gorky, de Kooning, Newman, Still, etc. The physical characteristics of Lobdell's painting associate it with that work of the New American Painting conventionally identified as abstract expressionism.

While New York City in the '40's was considered the center of abstract expressionist development, related, germinal work was emerging in the San Francisco Bay region at the same time. Artists such as Clyfford Still and Mark Rothko, travelling between the two cities carried approaches to painting developed in the San Francisco region to New York, as well as from New York.

Frank Lobdell, according to French art critic Michel Tapié, "is undoubtedly the most typical of the California group of artists who developed immediately following World War II as a result of the encouragement of Clyfford Still at the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco. In Lobdell's exploration of new space, discovered by Still, Lobdell defines and describes a force, as mystical as it is dramatic, comporting the certain power of what has already evidenced itself as the most completely 'artistic' space."

"Central to the art of Frank Lobdell loom the issues of mortal struggle and moral choice," says Walter Hopps,

former Director of the Pasadena Art Museum. "His art is deeply introspective, evokes questions of human dilemma and is far from an art of preconceived formal order, idealistic postulate, or hedonistic engagement. Confrontation with Lobdell's art immediately reveals his commitment to an evolving, intuitive, painterly process. Each painting, for the most part heavily worked and re-worked, obviously involves a prolonged process of formation. There is the sense that these paintings have been brought into being with great difficulty, and this sense of difficulty and struggle so overtly expressed, determine a core of meaning in the painting. The paintings are difficult in another sense, in the way their imagery defies conventional identification as either abstract or figurative. Established as a uniquely ambiguous imagery completely interlocked with and revealing of the physical consequence of the paint and paint application. This specific configuration of Lobdell's imagery changes as his work evolves in time, but perhaps consistent with it is its profoundly disquieting, often anguished tenor."

The uniqueness of Frank Lobdell's paintings sets him apart from the work of certain of his generation who were, and still are, active in the San Francisco Bay region. Lobdell's subject matter remains mystical and often foreboding.

One-man exhibitions include: Martha Jackson Gallery, 1958, '60, '63; De Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco, 1960; Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles, 1962; Galerie D. Bendor, Geneva, 1964; Galerie Anderson-Mayer, Paris, 1965; Pasadena Art Museum (retrospective) 1966.

Group exhibitions include: 111 Sao Paulo Bienal, Brazil, 1955; California Artists, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1956; The International Art of a New Era, Osaka, Japan, 1958; Drawings by Richard Diebenkorn and Frank Lobdell, Pasadena Art Museum, 1961; The Artist's Environment: West Coast, U.C.L.A. Art Galleries, 1962; 50 California Artists; Whitney Museum, New York, 1962; West Coast: 1945-1969, Pasadena Art Museum, 1969; Kompas 4, Stedelijk Museum, Eindhoven, Holland, 1969; Thirty-Second Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting, The Corcoran, Washington, D.C., 1971; Martha Jackson Gallery Collection, Seibu Department Store, Tokyo, Japan, 1971; Whitney Painting Annual, Whitney Museum, New York, 1972.

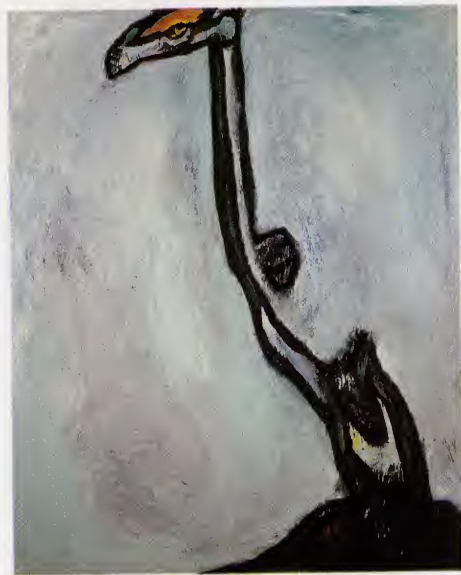
FRANK LOBDELL was born in Kansas City, Missouri, 1921. Studied at St. Paul School of Fine Arts, Minnesota, 1938-39; California School of Fine Arts, San Francisco, 1947-1950; Academie de la Grande Chaumière, Paris, 1950-1951. Taught at the California School of Fine Arts (San Francisco Art Institute), 1957-1965; Stanford University, California, since 1965. Lives in Palo Alto, California.

MARTHA JACKSON GALLERY

LOBDELL, FRANK



SPRING 1972, 1972, oil on canvas, 84 x 64"



UNTITLED, 1958, oil on canvas, 70 x 58"

FEBRUARY 27—MARCH 30, 1985



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OSCARSSON HOOD

FRANK
LOBDELL



FALL 1964, 1964, oil on canvas, 69¼ x 89¼"

Paintings and Gouaches, 1958-1972

Working both from and away from the figure, Frank Lobdell, since the early 1950s, in the San Francisco Bay Area, has evolved a spirited vision notable for its sheer emotive force and exciting structural energy. A bold and gifted painter in the American visionary tradition of Abstract Expressionism, during the period highlighted here, 1958-1972, he definitively found his forthright voice and developed both its poetic tone and provocative mode of address.

A fascinating record of his development, this body of work has considerable art historical significance. The paintings, *Untitled 1958, Fall 1964, In Memory of James Budd Dixon (1967), Summer 1968, Spring 1972*, each have an undeniably strong presence and a vitality that makes each one matter. Related to and in some respects anticipating the kind of aggressively visual and suggestive abstract painting which has emerged in the 1980s, these works, as a group, show an artist involved in the difficult process of discerning, that is giving life to form.

In the painting *1958*, for example, a long, thin organic shape bringing to mind some fantastic bony creature seems to rise above the surrounding chaotic flux from which it appears to have willfully risen. By the mid and late 1960s, Lobdell is turning his growing ability to articulate form and specify space toward emphatically expressive ends. On this level, then, the sensations of struggle and conflict emanating from the paintings of those years, filled with shapes recalling dismembered limbs, depicted as if in desperate, frenzied flight, can be interpreted not only in formal terms as the result of planar pressures and linear tensions, but as angry commentaries on the Viet Nam war, which was being waged then. But there are still other levels of meaning to them.

For example, the title of the large, monumental painting, *In Memory of James Budd Dixon*, refers to a painter friend of his who had died in 1967 "with no recognition," according to Lobdell. But the original idea for the painting was inspired by the work of Goya. And its imagery, developed in a series of lithographs Lobdell did at Tamarind in 1966-67, conveys the kind of moral



SUMMER 1967, IN MEMORY OF JAMES BUDD DIXON, 1967, oil on canvas, 90½ x 173½"

urgency as well as the dark air of mystery encountered in the work of the great Spanish artist.

In the late 1960s, Lobdell also became heavily involved in the figure, and the inventive scope of his investigations in the *Dance Series* are indicated in the gouaches of those years. In *Spring 1972*, Lobdell pulls back from the figure and allows other elements, the lines, circles, spirals which appear in his earlier paintings to emerge. Marking an important turning point in his career, this painting indicates the metaphysical but inherently sentient direction that Frank Lobdell's recent art has taken.

©Ronny Cohen, 1985

CREDITS

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Frank Lobdell

1921 Born, Kansas City, Missouri

Education

1947-50 California School of Fine Arts, San Francisco

1938-39 St. Paul School of Fine Arts, St. Paul, Minnesota

One Man Exhibitions

1985,

83-84

1983

Oscarsson Hood Gallery, NYC

San Francisco Museum of Art, retrospective, "Paintings and Monotypes." (cat.)

1981

1981

Smith Andersen Gallery, Palo Alto, California

College of Notre Dame Art Gallery, Belmont Indiana

1974, 72,

63, 60, 58 Martha Jackson Gallery, NYC (cat.)

1971

St. Mary's College Art Gallery, Moraga, California

1969

San Francisco Museum of Art (cat.)

1966

Pasadena Art Museum, Pasadena, California (cat.; trvllled)

1965

Galerie Andersen-Mayer, Paris

1964

Galerie D. Benador, Geneva

1962

Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles, California

1960

M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco, California (cat.)



Frank Lobdell

Born 1921, Kansas City, Missouri

EDUCATION

1947-50

California School of Fine Arts
(renamed the San Francisco Art
Institute in 1961)

1950-51

L'Academie de la Grande Chaumiere,
Paris, France

TEACHING

1966-91

Stanford University, CA

1957-65

San Francisco Art Institute

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2002

Hackett-Freedman Gallery,
San Francisco*

2000

Campbell-Thiebaud Gallery, San
Francisco, also 1998, 1995, 1992,
1991, 1990

1998

Hearst Art Gallery, St. Mary's College
of California, Moraga,* also 1971

1993

Stanford University Art Museum,
CA,* also 1988, 1966

1992

M. H. deYoung Memorial Museum of
Art, San Francisco, also 1960

1991

Smith Andersen Gallery, Palo Alto,
CA, also 1982, 1981, 1978, 1977

1985

Tyler Gallery, Temple University,
Philadelphia

1983

San Francisco Museum of Modern
Art,* also 1969

1981

College of Notre Dame Art Gallery,
Belmont, CA (traveled)*

1975

Martha Jackson Gallery, New York,
also 1974, 1972, 1963, 1960, 1958

1967

Marylhurst College, Portland, OR

1966

Pasadena Art Museum, CA (traveled)*

1965

Galerie Anderson-Mayer, Paris, France*

1962

Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

1948

College of the Pacific, Stockton, CA

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2002

The Contemporary Museum, Honolulu

2001

Worcester Art Museum, MA*

1997

Portland Art Museum, OR

1996

Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach,
CA (traveled)*

San Francisco Art Institute

(traveled),* also 1961, 1949

1995

Fresno Art Museum, CA*

1994

American Academy of Arts and
Letters, New York

1991

Stanford University, CA, also 1989,
1962

1986

Richmond Art Center, CA

1977

Smithsonian Institution, Washington,
DC (traveled)*

San Francisco Museum of Modern

Art,* also 1975 (traveled),*

1963,* 1957,* 1956 (traveled),*

1952, 1950,* 1948,* 1947*

1975

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis,*
also 1960

Newport Harbor Art Museum,
Newport Beach, CA*

1973

The Oakland Museum, CA,* also 1956
Pasadena Art Museum, CA,* also

1969,* 1961

1972

32nd Biennial, Whitney Museum of
American Art, New York*

Crocker Art Gallery, Sacramento, CA*

1971

Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington,
DC*

1969

Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven,
The Netherlands*

1968

Late Fifties at Ferus, Los Angeles
County Museum of Art

1967

The White House, Washington, DC

1965

M.H. deYoung Memorial Museum of
Art, San Francisco

1964

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
New York (traveled)*

1963

Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles, also 1961,
1960, 1959, 1958, 1957

California Palace of the Legion of
Honor, San Francisco, also 1948,

1947

International Center of Aesthetic
Research, Turin, Italy

Allentown Art Museum, PA*

1962

Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth
(traveled)*

Whitney Museum of American Art,
New York*

Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston

1958

Osaka International Festival, Japan

1956

Santa Barbara Museum of Art, CA

1955

Third Biennial, U.S. Exhibition, Sao
Paulo, Brazil*

1951

Petit Palais, Paris

1949

Minneapolis Institute of Art, MN

1948

Reed College, Portland, OR

* = catalogue

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

American Academy of Arts and
Letters, New York

Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth
Cantor Center for the Arts, Stanford

University, CA

Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA

The Fine Arts Museums of San

Francisco

Hood Museum, Dartmouth College,
Hanover, NH

Loeb Art Center, Vassar College,
Poughkeepsie, NY

Los Angeles County Museum of Art
The Menil Collection, Houston

M.H. de Young Memorial Museum,
San Francisco

Michener Collection, University of
Texas, Austin

National Academy of Design, New York
National Gallery of Art, Washington,

DC

Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena, CA

Oakland Museum of California

Phoenix Art Museum, AZ

San Francisco Museum of

Modern Art

Smithsonian American Art Museum,
Washington, DC

Frank Lobdell

ARTIST'S FILE

Early Works

November 23 – December 21, 2002

Reception for the artist

Thursday, November 21, 6 to 8 pm

Charles Cowles Gallery

537 West 24th Street Chelsea New York 10011

Tel (212) 925-3500 Fax (212) 925-3501

info@cowlesgallery.com

Gallery 3

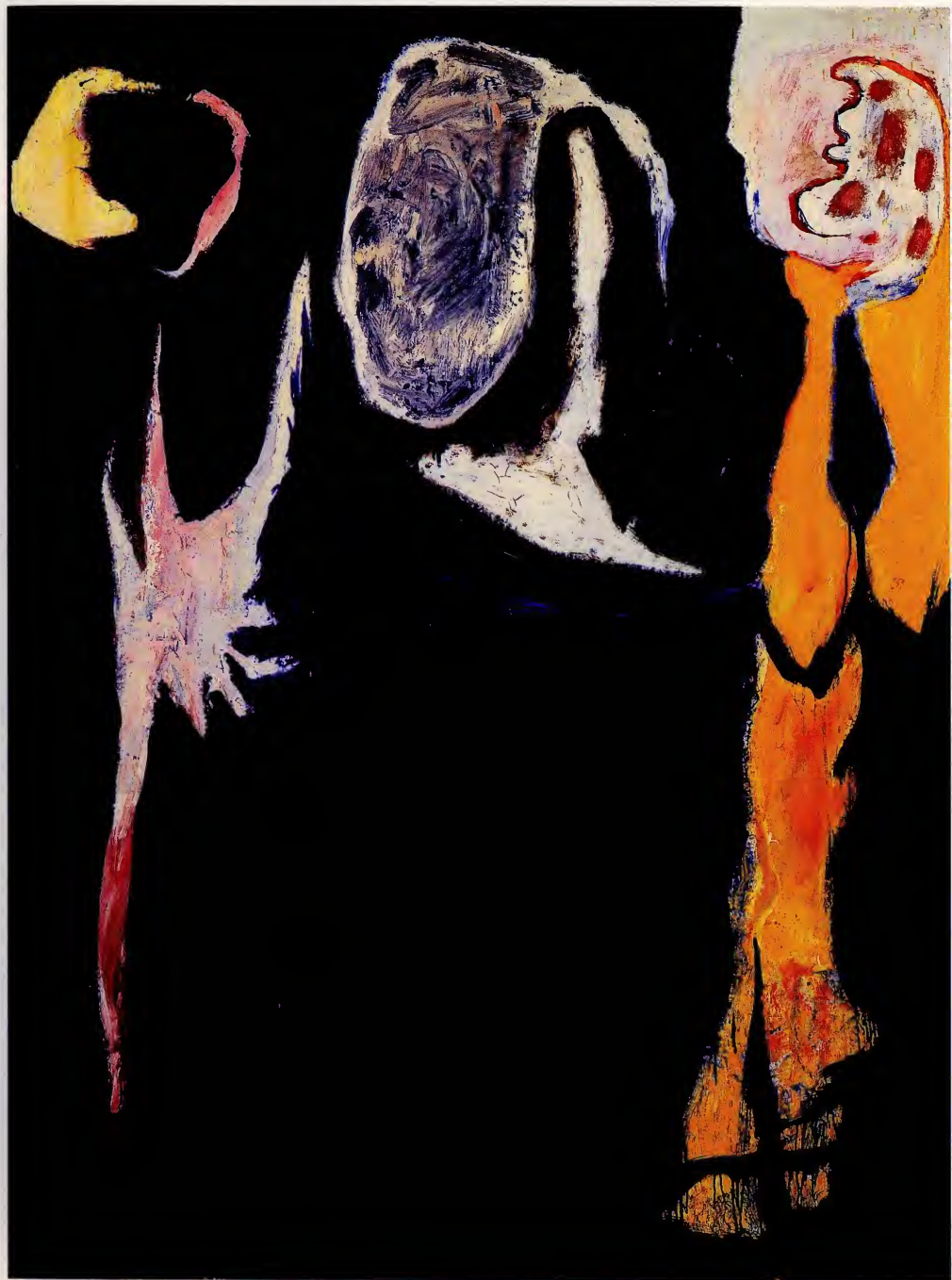
Richard Diebenkorn & Frank Lobdell

Figurative Drawings



ABOVE: Frank Lobdell, *Untitled*, 1968. Mixed media on paper, 17 × 14 inches

COVER: Frank Lobdell, *July 1954*, 1954. Oil on canvas, 66½ × 49¼ inches



FROM THE SHADOWY WORLD OF ARTIST FRANK LOBDELL

By WILLIAM WILSON

SAN FRANCISCO—A heroic prototype of the modern artist limns a person of fantastic integrity concerned only with the quality of his work. He scorns worldly recognition, laboring in monkish obscurity to produce epiphanies that are the outcome of nothing but a tough and lonely dialogue between himself and the objects he makes. No crowd-pleasing, fashion-following or money-making considerations are allowed to intervene. He is the existential guerrilla who does more than fashion himself out of whole cloth; he weaves the cloth.

By reputation Bay Area painter Frank Lobdell is such an artist. He is 61 and participated in his first public exhibition in 1947, but even those familiar with the broad outlines of California contemporary art are likely to have an imperfect notion of just what he does. There has not been a substantial survey of his work hereabouts since 1966 when big, dark, agonized Abstract Expressionist compositions were shown at the old Pasadena Art Museum. (The show also appeared at Stanford University where Lobdell has taught since 1965.)

Now a welcome update is on view at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art to March 27 in a survey put together by George W. Neubert, the museum's associate director for art. It fills in Lobdell's early background with such works as "March, 1954." Most are titled only by season and year, presumably indicating the time of completion and intended to be simply an objective designation. But the nature of the work makes them feel autobiographical, like "This Is What I Struggled With in the Spring of '54."

The artist is the furthest thing from prolific and labors long over each work. According to a probing catalogue essay by critic Thomas Albright, he works doggedly in an ambiance of self-doubt. Attacks of indecision cause long interruptions.

The early composition is dominated by an odd shape drawn with brush and covered in nervous little spots. Nominally an abstract artist, Lobdell is never far from figural or symbolic imagery. Here lumpy form suggests both a branched tree trunk and a dismembered human torso. In style it brings to mind Lobdell's contemporary, John Altoon. They share a capacity for off-the-wall spontaneity, but where Altoon's work often had an edge of antic energy to mitigate convulsiveness, Lobdell's is solemn and unsmiling.

intense agony, turmoil and paranoia and such strong internal contradictions that they seem to want to self-destruct.

After a transitional time in the early '70s, Lobdell's palette brightens, compositions find more normative anchoring and the artist's vocabulary of shapes forms into a series of primitive pictographs such as the concentric whorl, sunburst circle, spherical segments suggesting moons, lightning zig-zags and the like. Such nature-evoking iconography makes the art appear even more like landscape rendered in the syntax of Abstract Expressionism. But in another catalogue essay Peter Boswell argues convincingly that these are "mindscapes" and that the almost graffiti-like marks continue to be symbolic, not literal but evocative.

If one were forced to write a stylistic recipe to describe this art it would have to consist of at least one third of Robert Motherwell's late work. Coloring is every bit as urbane and smoothly applied. There is a similar liking for broad swaths and lines making vertical divisions. Lobdell's shapes appear as more primitive versions of biomorphs associated with Joan Miro.

Lobdell, however, puts himself to great pains to avoid either the decorative cosmopolitanism of the one or the wit and universality of the other. We are reminded time and again of the "personal" quality of this art and that it cannot be construed to serve any other purpose than that of its maker's internal dialogue. In that respect, it is also like the work of another artist, Lobdell's great early mentor, Clyfford Still. Lobdell shares the master's hermetic aloofness, achieving the look of integrity through a kind of aristocratic distance.

Lobdell's work is more jazz-related and colloquial. Compared to his early production with its almost psychotic intensity, later achievements like "Fall, 1980" are objective and internally at ease. They cannot, however, resist creating energized imbalance. Just when you

SUNDAY, MARCH 13, 1983

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LOS ANGELES COUNTY
MUSEUM OF ART

LOBDELL, FRANK

SAN FRANCISCO—A heroic prototype of the modern artist limns a person of fantastic integrity concerned only with the quality of his work. He scorns worldly recognition, laboring in monkish obscurity to produce epiphanies that are the outcome of nothing but a tough and lonely dialogue between himself and the objects he makes. No crowd-pleasing, fashion-following or money-making considerations are allowed to intervene. He is the existential guerrilla who does more than fashion himself out of whole cloth; he weaves the cloth.

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"April '57" is one of those dark, heavily impastoed compositions long associated with Lobdell. A contorted shape suspended from the top hangs like a piece of flayed meat. A large hole seems to emit a slow, gurgling scream. By the fall of '69 Lobdell is into one of the few series with non-date titles. Pictures called "pre-Dance" show running feet in a style clearly inspired by Picasso's haunted Surrealist images of the '30s. Such pictures establish an emotional tone of

intense agony, turmoil and paranoia and such strong internal contradictions that they seem to want to self-destruct.

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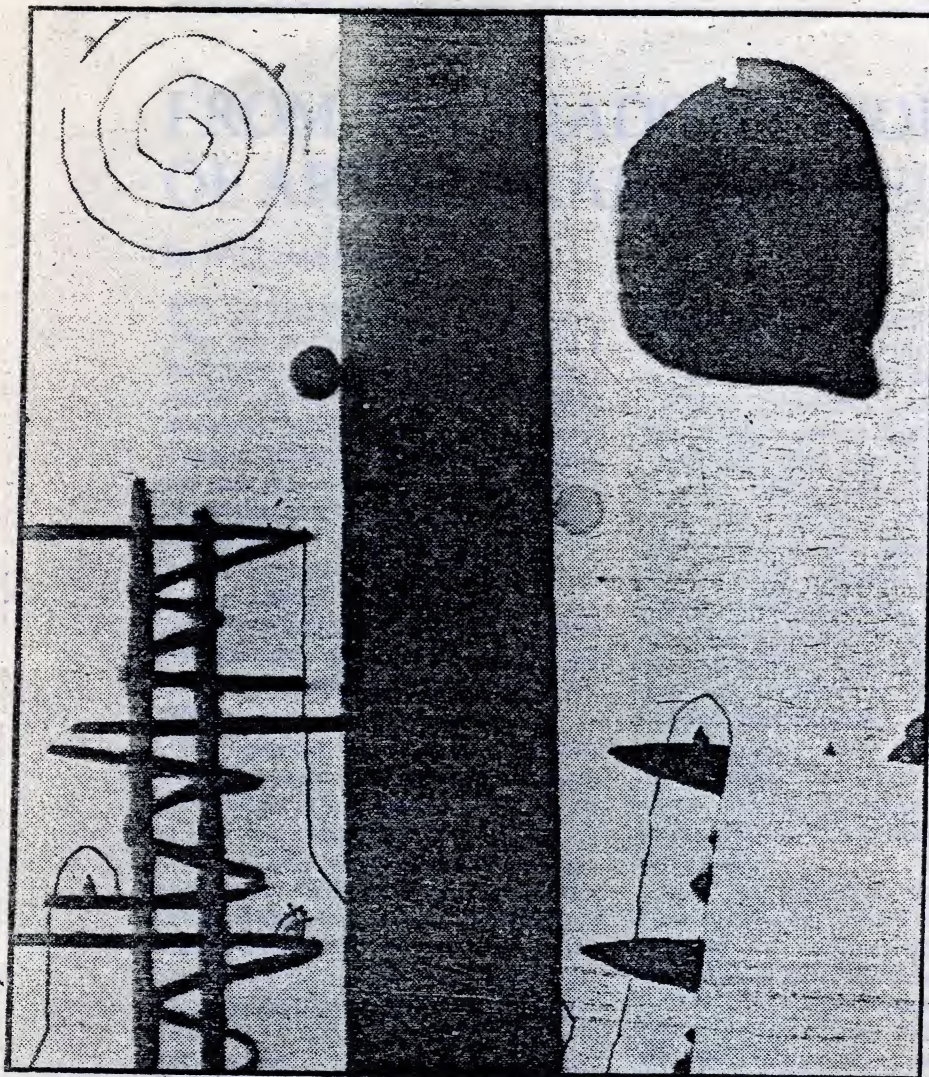
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"Fall, 1980" by Frank Lobdell, among San Francisco museum exhibits.

think you're about to have a suave and well-tempered experience, Lobdell throws in shapes as scary as sharks' teeth.

As a result works are fated to remain formidably good paintings in the act of having an argument with themselves. They have not set out to be historically significant and so they are not. They have been unwilling to settle into any normative emotional pattern whether it be the responsible maturity of epic virtuosity, the muscularity of inventiveness or the intimacy of pure lyricism.

The experience of them is like wandering into a picturesque San Francisco bay-side bar and falling into conversation

with an interesting character who looks like a truck driver whose street-wisdom is overlaid with the complicated mentality of a self-taught intellectual. Oddly nervous for a big guy. After a couple of drinks you worry that he's getting a little hostile, but he's just kidding. You begin chuckling at his offbeat humor, then realize he means to be vaguely threatening.

Eventually you leave because the conversation is moving in circles. You remember the experience but it doesn't resonate because the guy just wouldn't be about anything. In the end, the only content of his heroic individuality is its own willful eccentricity. □



FRANK LOBDELL

Works from 1980 to 2008

Living Legends of the Bay Area Series

presented by the

Marin Museum of Contemporary Art

